

Healing Crisis by Herxheimer Reaction: Is This Side Effects or Lazarus Effects?

By Simon Yu, MD

Old country medical doctors often talked about the “Healing Crisis”, the cleansing reaction or retracing when they would administer herbs or medications. They would often be at the bedside monitoring their patient going through extreme fever, chills, nausea, diarrhea, cramps, and skin eruptions with boils, hives or rashes and with a strong emotional release or even delusions.

So, what is the healing crisis? It is also known as the Herxheimer Reaction. This reaction occurs when the body tries to eliminate toxins at a faster rate than the body can properly dispose of them. The most common reaction occurs as bacteria or yeast dies off during the course of antibiotics or antifungal medication. Lesser known, anti-parasite medications can also trigger Herxheimer reactions but most physicians do not have enough experience with parasite medications.

According to Wikipedia, both Adolf Jarisch, an Austrian dermatologist, and Karl Herxheimer, a German dermatologist, are credited with the discovery of the Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction or simply Herxheimer reaction. The reaction was first seen following treatment in early and later stages of syphilis treated with mercury or antibiotics. It is seen in 50% of patients with primary syphilis and 90% of patients with secondary syphilis.

Why is it important for you to understand the healing crisis, the Herxheimer reaction? It is a lot more common than you may think. However, most people assume the reaction as side effects of the medications and not a part of the healing process. As a consequence, they stop the medications out of fear.

The more you are chronically ill with the burden of toxins in your system, the more severe the detoxification reaction or healing crisis you may experience. It is characterized by a temporary increase in symptoms during the cleansing or detox process.

But these reactions are instead signs that the treatment is working and that your body is going through the process of cleansing itself of the toxins. Such reactions are temporary and can occur immediately or within a few days after starting the medical treatment. Symptoms usually last a few days and rarely last for weeks. Often, what you experience during the healing crisis may be identical to the disease itself.

What can you do when you experience the healing crisis or Herxheimer Reaction? Drink plenty of filtered water to keep your body well hydrated and to flush the toxins. You may also use herbal tea or vegetable juice and start a coffee enema or colonics to assist the detoxification by increasing the rate at which your body can rid itself of the toxins. If you are still feeling fatigued or sleepy, be kind to yourself and get periodical rest during the day and plenty of sleep at night.

If you are not responding to the above steps, call your doctor. You may need to reduce the dosage or temporarily stop the medication under your doctor’s supervision. The Healing Crisis is a part of the healing process and not necessarily the side effects of the treatment or medications. Knowing the difference between the healing crisis and the side effects of the treatment is not so obvious. That is considered the Art of Medicine.

One of my patients, SJB described her journey of the healing process in her testimonial, titled, “You Have Given Me My Life Back” on my web site (shown below). It took her several years to recover from the effects of mercury poisoning and the neurological symptoms she was experiencing. Her treatments

included chelation therapy, dental work, nutritional support and detoxification. She described her experience of recovery as the “Lazarus” in her. Her full description of her healing process is described in my book, *Accidental Cure* in a chapter called “Lazarus Effects.” When the healing crisis has passed, you may feel as though you experienced the Lazarus Effect.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories visit his web site at www.PreventionAndHealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Please call to verify the date and reserve your space.



Simon Yu, M.D.
Prevention and Healing, Inc.
St. Louis, MO
314-432-7802
www.preventionandhealing.com

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